

that he then affected — velvet coat of an original cut thrown wide open, and ruffles to its sleeves, shirt collars turned down in Byronic fashion, an elaborately embroidered waistcoat whence issued voluminous folds of frill, and shoes adorned with red rosettes — his black hair pomatumed and elaborately curled, and his person redolent with perfume — announcing himself as the Homer or Dante of the age.' Thus arrayed, and standing- with his back to the fire, our poet unfolded in grandiloquent language his great conception ; and he then declaimed in pretentious tones the whole of his first canto. But unfortunately for the effect produced he had no sooner left the room than Samuel Warren,¹ who was present, recited in perfect mimicry of style and voice and manner a number of heroic verses improvised for the occasion ; and the company, which had no doubt been hovering between admiration and amusement, hardly knowing whether to regard the poem as a work of genius or of coxcombry, settled the question at once by going into fits of laughter.

The *Epiek* was published in the spring of 1834, the first book separately in March, the second and third together in June. ' My poem turns out a terrible labor,' he -wrote to Austen on the eve of publication, but presently added with some complacency: —

I have executed the work to my satisfaction and, what is of more importance, to the satisfaction of my father, a critic difficult to please. I await the great result with composure, though I am not sanguine of pleasing the million. I feel that I have now done enough for my reputation and that *I* am. at length justified in merely looking to my purse.

The preface showed more becoming diffidence:

I have ventured to submit to the public but a small portion of my creation, and even that with unaffected distrust and Bmcere humility TOatever may be their decision I shall

in the imaginary consolation for the neglect of my contemporaries

¹ Author of *Ten Thousand a Year*.

